



Casa Cuna Progreso receives a gift from the Royal Dutch Marines

There was a dirty job that needed to be done at the Casa Cuna center for children in Pos Chiquito, and the Royal Dutch Marines, stationed in Saveneta, made sure it was done with the proceeds from their May Day open house.

Every year, on the first day of May, an international holiday, the marines open their camp to the public and conduct a number of exciting exercises that allow those attending to see them at work. There is a flea market, food stalls, plus fun and games for the children. It is an terrific holiday outing for all the family, and thousands attend. Each year, following this event, and under the leadership of the marine's pastor, some island charity will benefit from the funds collected from the various vendors with concessions that take part. This year it was the Casa Cuna Progreso. Casa Cuna is a home for children from infancy to seven years that are taken from troubled homes and given a stable environment and structure with the trained professionals that work at the center. When the marines chose Casa Cuna as the beneficiaries of this year's proceeds, they inquired from the staff as to what was needed, and Casa Cuna Director Charisse Hoen-Daly requested what is called in Dutch, a "mud pool."

The actual structure built and paid for by the marines is basically a sandbox filled with dirt. This, according to psychologists, will allow the children to play, get dirty, and work out many aggressions brought on by their home situation.

On Wednesday morning, November 15, Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Mac Mootry, Commandant of the Royal Dutch Marine Camp, was joined by Reverend Dick Pranger and Logistics Officer Lieutenant-Commander Baars to officially present the "mud pool" to Casa Cuna Progreso..

In presenting the new play area, the camp commander, Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Mac Mootry extended a thank-you to the Aruban community "for always making the marines stationed in Aruba feel more than accepted, but welcomed and appreciated." He felt that giving back to the people of the island is not only an obligation, but also a pleasure for those stationed here.

Attending the presentation along with the marines was Wilwicht van Opstat, a civil engineer with the marines who was instrumental in the design and construction of the new play area. Accepting on behalf of the center were board members Diet Booi and Jim Tuis. They in turn presented a plaque to Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Mac Mootry in gratitude for this gift that cost 10,000 Aruban florins (\$5,700. U.S.) and which will be put to good use by the children.